teaspoon ground cinnamon
teaspoon ground nutmeg
teaspoon ground allspice
teaspoon ground cloves
cup chopped nuts: almonds, walnuts or pecans

Brandy, bourbon or Cointreau

1. Combine orange juice concentrate, molasses and raisins. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until mixture comes to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer 5 minutes, then remove from heat. Reserve ½ cup of the fruit for garnish; stir remainder into orange juice mixture.
2. Using electric mixer, cream together butter and sugar; beat in eggs one at a time. Sift together flour, soda and spices; add to butter mixture and stir well. Add orange juice mixture and nuts; mix well.
3. Place a teaspoon of batter into paper-lined miniature muffin tins. Top with one or two pieces of reserved fruit or a candied cherry. Bake at 350° for 20 to 25 minutes — do not overbake. Cool, then prick with a fork and sprinkle with brandy, bourbon or Cointreau. Store in airtight tins; these will keep well. *Makes 100 bonbons*

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Almond Sherry Cake

1 package (18½ ounces) yellow cake mix (not pudding type)
4 large eggs
¾ cup cream sherry
¾ cup vegetable oil
1 package (3⅝ ounces) instant vanilla pudding mix
½ teaspoon nutmeg
Streusel Filling (recipe follows)
Sherry Glaze (recipe follows)
¼ cup Blue Diamond® Sliced Natural Almonds, toasted

Grease and flour a 10-inch Bundt pan; set aside. In a large bowl, combine cake mix, eggs, sherry, oil, pudding mix and nutmeg. Mix at low speed 1 minute, scraping bowl constantly. Mix at medium speed 3 minutes, scraping bowl occasionally (or beat by hand 5 minutes). Pour half of batter into prepared pan. Sprinkle evenly with Streusel Filling. Pour in remaining cake batter. Bake at 350° F, 45 to 50 minutes, or until cake springs back when touched lightly. Cool on wire rack 15 minutes. Unmold from pan; cool completely on rack. Brush with Sherry Glaze; garnish with almonds. Makes 10 to 12 servings.

Streusel Filling: Mix 1/3 cup packed brown sugar, 1/4 cup flour, 3 tablespoons firm butter or margarine and 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon together until crumbly. Stir in 3/4 cup toasted Blue Diamond® Sliced Natural Almonds.

Sherry Glaze: Stir together 2 cups sifted powdered sugar, 1/3 cup melted butter or margarine and 1 tablespoon cream sherry. Stir in 1 to 2 teaspoons hot water, until glaze is of desired consistency.

Almond Crescents

1 package (10 ounces) or 2 cups Blue Diamond® Whole Natural Almonds
1¼ cups flour
¼ cup sugar
1 cup butter
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup powdered sugar, optional

Measure 1-2/3 cups almonds. Whirl in blender or grind fine. Finely chop remaining almonds and set aside. Mix flour, sugar and ground almonds. With fingers work in butter and vanilla extract until mixture cleans bowl. Chill about 1 hour. Roll dough into balls (about 1-1/4 inches), then into rolls (about 3-1/2 inches long), then form into crescents. Press tops into chopped almonds. Bake on ungreased cookie sheet in 350°F. (moderate) oven 12 to 15 minutes until lightly browned. Cool on pan about 10 minutes. While still warm, roll in powdered sugar, if desired. Makes 25 to 30 crescents.

The Nutsnacker

2 packages (8 ounces each) cream cheese, softened
2 jars (5 ounces each) pasteurized process cheese spread with pimiento
½ pound blue cheese, crumbled
¼ cup minced green onion
½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
2 cups Blue Diamond® Blanched Whole Almonds, toasted
Pine sprigs for garnish
Crackers

In large bowl with mixer at medium speed, beat cream cheese, cheese spread with pimiento and blue cheese until smooth. With spoon, stir in green onions and Worcestershire sauce. Cover and refrigerate about one hour. On work surface, with hands, shape cheese mixture into shape of large pinecone. Arrange on wooden board. Beginning at narrow end of cone, carefully press almonds about 1/4 inch deep into cheese mixture in rows, making sure that pointed end of each almond extends at a slight angle. Continue pressing almonds into cheese mixture in rows, with rows slightly overlapping, until all cheese is covered. Garnish pinecone with pine sprigs. Serve with crackers. Makes about 25 servings.

More Almond Holiday Recipes...for a copy of "The New Treasury of Almond Recipes" (100 great recipes), send 75¢ to P.O. Box 42577, San Francisco, CA 94142.

ALMOND SNOWBALLS

½ cup unsalted butter or margarine, softened
½ cup sugar
½ cup finely ground almonds
1 cup unsifted all-purpose flour
¼ teaspoon salt, or to taste
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup confectioners' sugar

1. Using electric mixer, cream butter; gradually add sugar, beating until light. Add almonds, flour, salt and vanilla; mix with your hands until dough holds together. If necessary, add 1 or 2 teaspoons of cold water. Preheat oven to 300°.
2. Use about 1 teaspoonful of dough for each cookie and roll between palms of hands until smooth and round. Place on foil-lined, ungreased baking sheet. Continue until all dough is shaped.
3. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, or until cookies are lightly browned. While still warm, dust heavily with confectioners' sugar and allow to cool to room temperature. *Makes about 50 snowballs*

VIENNESE LINZER COOKIE BARS

1½ cups unsifted all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
Dash of ground cloves
¼ teaspoon salt, or to taste
½ cup sugar
½ cup packed dark brown sugar
¼ lb. unsalted butter or margarine
2½ oz. blanched almonds, ground
1 egg, lightly beaten
1 teaspoon grated lemon rind
1½ cups red raspberry jam

1. Into large bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, cinnamon, cloves and salt. Stir in sugar and brown sugar.
2. Using a pastry blender or two knives, cut butter into flour mixture until crumbly.
3. To flour mixture add ground almonds, egg and lemon rind; mix together firmly with your hands until mixture is moist throughout and holds together.
4. Remove ½ cup of dough. Spread remaining dough onto lightly greased 15×10×2-inch pan, using your fingers to press dough evenly. Spread a layer of jam over dough, leaving a ¼-inch border all around. Preheat oven to 375°.
5. Roll the reserved dough into a 9-inch square and cut into ½-inch-wide strips. Place strips in a crisscross-lattice pattern on top of jam.
6. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes. When cool, cut into 3×2-inch bars.

Makes about 24 bars

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